MORTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Kyle L. Kirchmeier, Sheriff

NEWS RELEASE
For Immediate Release
September 28, 2016
Contact: Morton County PIO (701) 426-1587

21 Dakota Access Pipeline Protesters Arrested

Mandan, N.D. –Law enforcement officers assigned to the Dakota Access Pipeline protest arrested 21 protesters at two construction sites along the DAPL south and west of St. Anthony. Officers arrested the protesters for various crimes including resisting arrest, criminal trespass on private property and possession of stolen property. Tow trucks were called to transport 5 impounded vehicles.

When officers responded they witnessed numerous people and horses on private property. A protester on horseback charged at an officer in what was viewed as an act of aggression. The officer responded with an appropriate show of force by raising his weapon containing less-lethal ammunition.

"Our officers are trained to respond to the threats they perceive and to take appropriate action. A charging horse combined with totality of the situation presented an imminent threat to the officer," said Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier.

Due to the current threat to public safety, law enforcement responded with specialized equipment and weapons to include armored vehicles and less lethal ammunition using bean-bag rounds.

With continued illegal activity in the area, Sheriff Kirchmeier has increased patrols and visibility in southern Morton County.

205 First Avenue NW Mandan, ND 58554
Phone (701) 667-3330 Fax (701) 667-3463
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"The safety of our citizens is paramount. Our number one priority is and always will be public safety for the residents of Morton County and our visitors," said Kirchmeier.

Throughout this incident there have been numerous rumors circulating in the protest camps and social media about law enforcement tactics and response. There were reports today of an airplane flying over the protesters and dropping mustard or tear gas. Investigations into this rumor determined it was a crop duster spraying a field.

After today's arrests, there have been 95 arrested for protest activities since the start of the Dakota Access Pipeline protests.

Please report any suspicious activity you observe, no matter how insignificant it may seem, to the Morton County Sheriff's Office at 701-667-3330.

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